

WEEK OF April 22, 2002: MDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Vehicle-Moose Collisions

Driver safety question:

- How many vehicle-moose collisions are reported in Maine each year? (About 700)
- What months of the year are moose-vehicle collisions most frequent? (May-June)
- Are crashes with moose a problem only in northern and northwestern Maine?
(No, moose crashes are reported in every Maine county each year)

Openers and Basic Crash Facts:

- Maine is a great place to see wildlife. But hitting a large animal with your vehicle can be deadly.
- Moose crashes are especially dangerous because the moose stands higher than most car hoods. When you hit a moose, the large, heavy body tends to ride up over the hood into the passenger area.
- About 700 moose-vehicle crashes are reported in Maine each year.
- Eight people were killed in moose-vehicle crashes in Maine in the past three years. Another 700 people were injured.
- Moose-vehicle collisions can happen anywhere in Maine. Crashes are reported in all 16 Maine counties each year.

Safety Tips:

Reducing your chances of hitting a moose:

- Collisions with moose can happen anytime. Most moose-vehicle crashes happen during the evening and nighttime.
- Crashes with moose are more apt to happen in warmer months and are most frequent in May and June.
- Driver inattention and speed are common factors in moose-vehicle crashes.
- Reduce speed in darkness, rain and fog. All three can reduce your ability to see a moose in the road ahead, but none of them deter moose from moving on or near the road.
- Moose are extremely difficult to see at night. Their dark-colored coats blend into the background and their eyes don't reflect light. Use your high beams when possible.

What to do if you see a moose:

- Don't try to drive around it. Animal movements are unpredictable.
- Stay in your vehicle. Getting out to look at, photograph or chase the moose increases your chances of being hit by another vehicle. Furthermore, moose may charge you or your vehicle.
- Give the moose plenty of room and wait for it to wander back into the woods.

Other tips:

- A roadside shoulder is not a safe place for viewing moose. Other drivers may be distracted by the moose and hit your vehicle. Find a place to get completely off the road and shoulder. And be sure to stay in your vehicle because moose are wild, unpredictable animals.

*Prepared by:
Safety Management
Systems Management Division
Bureau of Planning
Maine Department of Transportation*